



State of Arizona Department of Education
Research and Evaluation

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter Holders, Principals, and Test Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Carrie L. Giovannone
Deputy Associate Superintendent of Research & Evaluation

Dr. Yovhane Metcalfe
Director of Accountability

DATE: January 28, 2014

SUBJECT: **Alternative School Status Online Form and Guidance Document (REF: 14001E)**

On Monday morning, January 27, 2014, we presented to the State Board recommendations on modifications to the Alternative School definition, the determination process, the new online application, and the guidance document. This State Board item was for information only; action will be requested from the State Board members at the February 24, 2014 meeting.

Alternative status designates the A-F Letter Grade Alternative Schools model used for accountability. In this model, the distribution scale used to determine the Alternative school letter grades (i.e., A-Alt, B-Alt, etc.) is sensitive to the performance of all alternative schools throughout the state. Therefore, to the verification of alternative school status safeguards the integrity of the grading scale. Only schools that service the student population in need of an alternative education setting would be designated as an alternative school. ADE will offer guidance on this new process. The guidance document outlines the verification process and exemplifies how a school may verify their student population.

In addition, alternative schools which may also be considered a Credit Recovery School may also indicate this status through the online application. Credit Recovery Alternative schools are exempt from the Title 1 focus school criterion of low graduation rate for traditional schools. This exemption does not include an exemption from the Title 1 Focus school achievement criteria nor the Title 1 Alternative Focus school criteria. Some schools applying for alternative status may choose to forego the credit recovery designation; all schools designated as credit recovery will refer to the online alternative status application and process.

Requirements

Existing alternative schools must:

- Recertify each fiscal year.
- Complete the online application and upload their mission statement.
- Indicate total enrollment of students as of October 1st of current school year **and** the number of students by **category** based on their **initial** enrollment.

Select “Credit Recovery” on the application to be eligible for the Title 1 exemption from the Focus school criteria for traditional schools. Every school may appeal any substantive issue that disrupts their accountability measures for the current year – including denial of alternative school status.

Timeline

The table below outlines the proposed timeline for the Alternative School application (Please note: There is a separate timeline specifically for 2013-2014 school year only).

2013-2014 School Year ONLY	
January 27	Present to the State Board as informational only.
January 28 – February 7	Vet the definition, requirements, and application process to the field for comments.
February 24	Incorporate feedback from the field and present to the State Board for a motion to proceed.
March 1 – April 1	Online annual application will be posted.
April 1 – May 15	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS deem necessary. <i>Please note: In FY14, failure to meet the 70% enrollment criteria will result in a ‘probational’ alternative school status and will be audited the following year to confirm the enrollment for FY15.</i>
May 30	ADE R&E will notify schools of their 2013-2014 application for alternative school status.

2014-2015 School Year & beyond	
October 1 – November 1	Online annual application will be posted.
November 1 – February 28	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS deem necessary.
March 1 – March 30	Schools will be notified of their status for the current school year accountability determination.

This morning we posted the following for feedback from the field:

- Presentation to State Board explaining the rules and processes,
- A copy of the online application, and
- the drafted guidance document.

Please take a few minutes to review the online application at <http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/2013/08/09/alternative-school-status-application/> and review the guidance document.

We appreciate feedback from the field so we are posting the documents and application until February 7, 2014 for that purpose. Please email your feedback to achieve@azed.gov with “New Alt application feedback” in the subject line.